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## **Senate passes graduation-requirement plan**

**LANSING** — The Michigan Senate approved legislation today that puts Michigan at the forefront of efforts to create rigorous statewide high-school graduation requirements so young people leave school ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

“The skills and training that will enable our young people to be competitive in today’s economy have to be required teaching in our high schools,” said Sen. Valde Garcia, R-Howell. “This legislation brings Michigan standards in line with those of other states and ensures that our high-school students receive a first-rate education.”

Senate Bill 1124 will require students to take four years, or equivalent credit, of English and math; three of science and social studies; and one year of an arts course as well as a health and physical-education course. Additionally, students will have to take biology, geometry and Algebra I and II, among other specific course requirements.

The Michigan House of Representatives has offered an alternative graduation-requirements proposal. In one key difference from the House plan, senators backed a two-year foreign-language requirement that could be fulfilled anytime between kindergarten and graduation.

The Senate Education Committee logged almost 3,000 miles in travel to hearings across the state that included local lawmakers. At the hearings, legislators listened to more than 24 hours of testimony from more than 200 people.

After the state superintendent and State Board of Education proposed graduation requirements beyond the half year of civics class now required, state lawmakers immediately began giving the board’s proposal careful consideration.

Lawmakers will now begin working out the differences between the Senate and House versions.

“While it is important we set high standards for high-school graduates, I still have some concerns on how we are going to implement this legislation,” added Garcia.

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